

Report from Alexander Graham Bell and Mabel Hubbard Bell to Gilbert Grosvenor, undated

277 Page 3 — 279 missing

COMMENTS ON MR. GROSVENOR'S TELEPHONE MATERIAL. (By Dr. Bell, and Mrs. Bell)

Page 48.

"But the latter who was devoted to a lady etc." (This won't do) "I was in Edinburgh settling up my brother's affairs, when my father's proposal came to go out to Canada. I was touched by his letter, and gave some reply which he took for acquiescence, when I reached London". (A. G. B.).

Page 49.

I suppose these are only from rough notes of some conversation with me. Won't do at all. Please don't give in quotation marks remarks credited to men — unless you have the remarks from me in black and white with my O. K. (A. G. B.).

Page 50.

I think Mr. Melville Bell named the place himself — and that it was for the Tutelo Tribe of Indians and that he bought it from them over. It would be possible I think, to find out all this by inquiring at Brantford, and it seems to me that if your part of the work is to have any greater value than that of any ordinary reporter, you should verify every statement by reference to original records. The recorder of Deeds in Brantford would tell you about Mr. Bell's purchase of the place — I think he bought it because it had such a beautiful situation on a cliff overlooking the valley with the Grand River meandering along fifty feet below.

Library of Congress

The house was very pretty and not very small. Of course I know you got your statements from some one of the family, but I think you ought to go back to official records when possible and it is possible in this case. (M. G. B.).

While facts are substantially as stated — I cannot accept the language. Think in such cases you should use the third person and not the first, and avoid quotation marks unless you quote from a letter or published record, or from writing O. Ked by me. These are your notes of a conversation with me — and require amendment of the language if I am to be credited with the remarks. (A. G. B.)

Father says the place was bought from Mr. and Mrs. Merton, and old gentleman and his wife. Their children had all married and gone there — Brantford, and they were left all alone there several miles out of town, and their children did not like it, and wanted them to come in there with them. Accordingly they were glad to sell out and sell everything as it stood.

2

278

The Heights did belong to a small Tribe of Indians called Tute los, and Mr. Melville Bell named the Heights after them. (M. G. B.).

Page 51.

From A. M. Bell's farewell address to Brantford 1881 on occasion of a public banquet tendered him. This shows you that your account of what happened to the brothers David and Melville after reaching manhood is not correct — others would spot it also. (M. G. B.). Don't you claim anything from somebody else.

Page 56.

Library of Congress

This is father's recollection noted Aug. 1904. It might be possible for you to obtain copies of the original letters from the School Board. This sort of thing would be my idea of what you could do for father. (M. G. B.).

Page 58.

Insert a few paragraphs on "what Speech is", voice, vocal organs etc. See "Mechanism of Speech". Also letter of Sunday Nov. 1st given some pages later. (M. G. B.).

Page 59.

No — the communication to Dr. Peet was written on the other side of the Atlantic before I came to Canada, Give reference to Convention proceedings, I reached Boston in the spring of April 1st, 1871, feeling strong and healthy after the nine months in the bracing air of Canada. (A. G. B.).

Page 60.

Insert about Clarke Institute, Horace Mann School, Mr. Hubbard Miss Rogers, Miss Fuller, and what they were seeking to accomplish. (A. G. B.).

Page 61.

"This is in after years", Suppose you ask father if Miss Hull was not a teacher of Speech to the Deaf. Speaking to Americans he would naturally refer to Miss Fuller, whereas as a matter of fact, I believe Miss Hull was the first to show him it could be done. Otherwise why should he have been interested in the Deaf and Dumb before he came to America. Of course Miss Fuller deepened the impression but to Miss Hull is due the first inspiration I think. (M. G. B.).

3

Page 67.

His results were the sensation of the day among the educators of America.(A. G. B.).

This maybe true — but firstly you don't know of it of your own knowledge — secondly you cannot say it from your family connection, thirdly it is not necessary anyway for you to do so for you can with perfect propriety and much more effect quote something to the same effect from contemporary documents or somebody elses say so.(M. G. B.).

Page 72.

Important Circular letter to principals of Deaf Schools.

Page 73.

Circular of A. G. B's School, 1872.

Page 75.

Statement of missionary studying Chinese with V. S. printed in A. G. B's circular. (A. G. B.).

“The instruction of Deaf is only one of the applications of Visible Speech. It is my intention to qualify missionaries, Philologists. Teachers of Primary Schools as well as to train articulation Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb. (A. G. B.).

Page 79.

DeLand, (A. G. B.).

Library of Congress

I don't see why DeLand should make any difference to you, you are to be headquarters. The repository of all material information. If it is interesting and illuminative what you want give it and never mind anyone else.(M. G. B.)

Page 80.

At Flint, August 1872.(A. G. B.)

Page 84.

I have just learned from my own teacher Miss that this is the very essence the most important point of father's own personal teaching. The point which made him pre-ominent above all others. She says:— I believe father would corborate her that even to-day teachers have not realized this; the core and essence;— the ground principle — the one grand thing that distinguishes V. S. from every other method, and because they have not carried on this especial method of father's — his very own; V. S. does not to-day occupy the position it should. Even Clarke Teachers have over looked this. They still teach

4

280

Page 84.

by what father has called the “No NO” method. Better get Miss to write you. She is a fine writer and one of father's first, and most enthusiastic pupils. Father is very anxious she should write, while you in your position cannot, directly claim that father was one of the greatest teachers of his time, I believe it should be possible to get witnesses still living to affirm and substantiate it. I know the impression made on me the first day I saw him was wonderful. I was too childish to appreciate the man who did not seem to me young; but the magnetism of his enthusiasm carried me completely off my feet and I became very much excited by what — on the face of it was a most dry pokery abstraction. (M. G. B.).

Library of Congress

Page 85.

I think the present president Warren Warder? was President than anyway he knows about it and wrote me wanting me to present the University with father's list. I thought if they wanted it, they could get it themselves. (M. G. B.)

Page 89.

She was his assistant and my teacher. She is Mrs. Stone now ought to be able to give you information.(M. G. B.)

Page 89.

I don't think you could ever call it that — that is too narrow. If you study the circulars you have just given you must see his teaching was much broader, comprehensive — don't limit your claim to that which was only a minor part.(M. G. B.)

Page 90.

This is liable to give an erroneous idea of father's character There was a special reason for his doing this at that time ask him, or rather I think he has given the reason in his testimony.(M. G. B.)

Page 99.

(?) A. G. B.)

Page 101.

Better make certain of this by consulting Mauro or some other expert. (A. G. B.)

Page 124

Library of Congress

(See foot note) Though I did not construct the apparatus. (A. G. B.)

5

281

Page 127.

Insert picture exhibit 28. Dorod Vol. 2.

Page 129.

Can omit most of this and succeeding. Insert from father's diary 1874. I did not construct the apparatus at this time. (A. G. B.)

Page 130.

Thought current generated by voice would be so weak that didn't even try it. Later found it was powerful enough. A. G. B

Page 132.

Surely that can't be correct. Isn't motor a new word? M. G. B.

Page 134.

This is a reference to my earliest invention — a method of removing the husks from wheat. Tried at Herdman's Mills in Edinburgh when I was a boy. (A. G. B.)

Page 139

I don't think he called it that at that time. Remember his discussing the name with me after we were engaged. (M. G. B.)

Page 140

My father's and Mr. Sanders arrangement was for the multiple and autograph telegraph. The telephone was a bye product and I think a sharp business man might have held it back and bargained for another arrangement. My father certainly thought it a waste of time that belonged to him for other things. (M. G (M. G. B.)

Page 142.

He and Miss Locke (I think) called to see my father and mother as my parents, as I was then one of their pupils. It was a formal call and Mr. Bell was invited to it and to stay to supper. Met him first at the Clarke Inc. in Miss Yale's parlor. Miss Rogers was then principal, but she was in Europe for a years absence to travel and study foreign instruction and at that time she and I were living together. Miss Yale and Miss Worcester sister of the Worcester of the Philippine Commission were carrying on the Inst. in her absence, and they wrote her all about the newcomer, and I saw their letters.

They were very entusisatic but I wasn't, thought him a crank so old an experienced was I at 14. (M. G. B.)

6

282

Page 151. (AGB)

Poor Father was "Twixt Anvil and Hammer" — or two fires in those days. On one hand his father vexed with him for neglecting V. S. and his professional work — on the other mine equally insistant on electricity. He really had a hard time and needed all his stubbornness and self-confidence to steer his way between the two opposing elements, both so very strong. (M. G. B.)

Library of Congress

Page 153.

What is the date of this letter? (A. G. B.)

Page 174.

Omit. This is my private affair. (M. G. B.)

Page 175.

No — they did not treat his affair with Miss Hubbard with the gravity and seriousness he thought it required. His father says he did not reply at all to a letter in which he communicated the fact of his having formed an attachment to Miss Hubbard. I have seen the letter. He had never said anything to any one of us so far, and he made the most in it of my father's position etc., and to minimize the fact that I was Deaf — a fact which he knew would naturally grieve both his father and mother especially the latter. She in fact answered regretting this and refering to the young lady as a Deaf-Mute an expression which always excited father's ire and which applied to me, and at that time maddened him beyond endurance and called forth the letter to which the other is the reply, I saw the whole correspondence at the time and there was nothing to call forth such a strong indignation had father been in a normal condition, but he was not. (M. G. B.)

Page 170.

Please don't forget that the "rich girl" you speak of is now your own mother-in-law and every one knows it, Also that you are describing Alexander Graham Bell's state of mind, and he never thought of me as a "rich girl", he might have thought of me as a "rich young lady". Now-adays its allright to talk and think of ones love as a rich or poor girl, it wasn't so thirty years ago, or rather the quality of fathers regard for me was different — that is the beauty and charm of father's regard for me. It was always so gentle and respectful — unlike that of most young fellows of any generation. Can't you see it in all his letters,

Library of Congress

and all his references to me, and above all in the delicate care he always took to keep my name out of the lawsuits. He considered his affection too sacred to be dragged into publicity, and I won't have it done now.

7

283

He treated me with almost quoxotic respect — to others might be a very ordinary little girl of seventeen — to him I was always the “de delicate” not house flower” who must be cared for and handled with corresponding tenderness and delicacy. I am not saying the facts were so. I always considered myself a very robust young person quite as well able to look after herself as any other gril; but you are describing things from father's point of view. Another thing is wrong. There never was — never could have been any question of money. Even to-day a young man of 28 who was conscious of his ability to earn from \$4000. to 5000. a year could hardly think himself unequal in means to most men's daughters. When he wrote my father asking me in marriage in June 1875, he wrote as one having the right to do so. He would have spoken to me that summer and we could have been married long before we were — but my father and mother thought I was too young and begged him to defer speaking to me on that account, and on that account alone. Nothing was said about money. He gave up his present means of support and deferred his marriage thereby because while he could make \$4000. a year, it would mean constant hard work at a profession he disliked, and he and my father felt that in his electrical invention especially the Autograph he would be able to mass a fortune which would place him beyond the necessity of distasteful labor. That was the motive of the whole thing, which you have not recognized. No escape from a non existent state of poverty, but the hope of amassing a fortune. His father on the other hand knew he had a sure means of liberal livlihood in his profession and thought him unwise to neglect the certainty of an annual income for the will o the whisp of a possible fortune. Mr. and Mrs. Bell never objected to me except that they would have preferred a hearing wife for their son and small blame to them. I don't think I could have accepted a deaf son-in-law with

Library of Congress

any kind of good grace, not even a Vanderbilt one, and they were lovely to me from the first moment they realized that their only son's heart was really bound up in winning Miss Hubbard. (M. G. B.)

Page 170.

Yes but I don't like the word or description. Lack of money never troubled him. He had only to collect his bills to get enough and he had a beautiful home with Mr. Sanders. He never accepted pay from G. S. so his position was perfectly equal one, or rather with favor on his side, (M. G. B.)

Page 178.

The reason he makes that remark about "Not rivalling you in scenery" is that the letter is the reply to me. I wrote him from Miss True's house in Bethel, Me, which is at the foot of the White Mountains. (M. G. B.)

Page 179.

This is a description of the Canadian home and life when he first came to Canada and would appropriately come with that part of your story referred to on p 50. (M. G. B.)

8

Page 181.

This would come in as a part of the story of father's early life. I do not care to be brought in. I am willing to have you use extracts from father's private letters to me when they illumine some point in his history or character, but I do not want them quoted as his letters to me, (M. G. B.)

Page 184,

Library of Congress

All these extracts require very delicate handling — while I pa pass them now I don't say that I will permit their publication now. I should like this letter published sometime, but I am by no means sure that the time is during father's lifetime. (M. G. B.)

Page 187.

I don't believe any are necessary as nothing ever came of it: (M. G. B.)

Page 191.

The draughtsman was father himself. I did some clean copying for him but every drawing was a copy of father's own. The “draughtsman” and the “inventor” were the same man viz: — A. G. B. (M. G. B.)

Page 193.

And it might not have been written if I had held him to the “letter of his bond” one certain night. (M. G. B.)

Page 195.

I don't think this is in any way material. It was not that father had no money at all simply that he did not have any cash in his pocket at the moment he was called on for some — an incident that might happen to him to-day. I do not believe father has ever gone very hungry for want of money. He certainly hired carriages at times when his resources were at their lowest ebb — see his account books. A certain Mr. Osborn dunned him for his father's bill at about the time of the pawned watch and finally sent him a cheque for \$50. which he presumed was about right as he could not get father to send in his account. Father had no objection to sending the bill, it was simply he was too busy to bother with it. This did not look like extreme poverty. I knew of it at the time. (M. G. B.)

Library of Congress

Page 197.

When did he say this? (M. G. B.)

9

Page 200.

In Europe a book on ornamental art had been purchased for Miss Mabel Hubbard by her father — but on their return to America the book could not be found. After more than a year the book arrived by express in Cambridge from some unknown source. Speculations were indulged as to what had been its history. “What a story that book could tell if it could speak” I remarked to Miss H. that evening. “why don't you write its story for me” she replied. I said, “yes” I will”, as I said good-bye, and wrote this letter of Oct. 26, 1875, the same evening. It turned out that the book had been in the possession of her Uncle, Mr. Richard McCurdy, who finding to whom it belonged returned it by express. (A. G. B.)

Page 200.

Miss Hubbard recognizing the handwriting thought this letter referred to my personal history, and did not discover until she had nearly sent it through that it was only the story of her book — which she had asked me to write. (A. G. B.)

Page 213.

His fee was \$5. an hour. (M. G. B.)

Page 218.

Our engagement day. This must be taken from letter written immediately after our engagement. (A. G. B.) Use just as authority. (M. G. B.)

Page 221.

Library of Congress

Don't know. I have some small portfolios in in Volta Bureau, I think containing pen and ink sketches by him — all small. (A. G. B.)

I never saw any except these small ones. (M. G. B.)

Page 237.

This of cours your authority for the statement but it must not appear. I always disowned the correctness of this statement. I neve intended him to think this. I certainly was very much worried about the whole question because I feared if he kept wandering from one thing to another nothing would ever be finished, and we would never have money enough to be married on. A girl of 18 could not know what promise of pecuniary success there was in one invention more than another — all she she could know was that she wanted to be married sometime nad her father told her the chance lay in the Autograph, rather than in the telephone, so she naturally was in favor of the 10 286 former for present emergencies. She therefore used her strongest persuasions in favor of the Autograph — but she never meant him to get the impression that she would not marry him if he did not go on with the Autograph — but it is true he did get that impression as shown in the letter — but I deny the justice of your remark that “I threatthened etc., — why perpetuate a lovers misunderstanding”. (M. G. B.)

Page 236.

I don't know about Don Pedro's state of mind. Father wrote to him because he was always trying to help the deaf in everyway. A visit from the Emperor would be an advertisement of Miss Fuller's School and might also lead to the establishment of similar schools in Brazil. It was not for Don Pedro's benefit especially as your remark might imply. (M. G. B.)

page 239.

Library of Congress

It didn't on the contrary I did not think enough was made of Mr. Bell by Miss Fuller. I was there and was mad about it at time. (M. G. B.)

Page 249.

TOO strong. (M. G. B.)

Page 241.

The difficulty was that Mrs. Bell had not entered his invention at the proper time, and it was difficult to do so latter. My father however was at the head of the Mass. Board of Education which was making about the finest Educational Exhibit at the Centennial Exposition, and was therefore able from his official position to procure the entry of Mr. Bell's instruments which otherwise might have been impossible. (M. G. B.)

Page 243.

What is your authority for al this, I don't remember any thing of the kind, and we didn't indulge in carriages in those days. (M. G. B.)

Page 244.

I have read this story before but the author was better informed than I was, so far as my recollection goes it is made up nearly of White cloth, It is certainly true that my mother and I had the hardest time to get fahter to go and we did not breathe freely until the train had moved out of the station but we did not use false pretences to get him there, and I 11 more than this I can't remember, and I would like to see the contemporary evidence of it. Father likes to talk of my bursting into tears he also likes to say that I talked promising to obey in the marriage service — it makes such a good story — but I always denied it. The episcopal was the form used — one has to repeat phrase by pkrase fater the minister. I never had read his speech very well and as a percaution, I both learned the service

Library of Congress

by heart, and went over it with the minister, but when the time came I forgot the exact phraseology and failed to read it from Dr. McKenzie's lips So I just kept silence till he repeated the phrase and then I got it, but it wasn't anything so dramatical as a pause before promises to obey would have been — and I had never any intention of publically refusing to. (M. G. B.)

Page 245.

Don't like that word. (M. G. B.)

Page 246.

This is important for it shows that it was a toss up whether he could get the telephone exhibited at all. He got it simply through my father's influence. (M. G. B.)

Page 253.

I fancy it was much more “nervously”. (M. G. B.)

Page 255. Up to the telephone. Grouped themselves around.(A. G. B.)

Page 256.

I left them there and proceeded to the transmitter — which was at some distance away in another room. (A. G. B.)

Page 257.

Well known scientific man who lived in Montreal, but I think he was an American, and amember of the American National Academy of Sciences. (M. G. B.)

Page 259 It seems that after our trials that morning someone — Elisha Gray I understood — had privately to one of the judges suggested that in my experiments the spoken words

Library of Congress

might have been mechanically transmitted along the wire as in the well-known thread telegraph. (A. G. B.)

12

Page 274.

Probably (by "study" window) — that is — I made my appearance by climbing in at the window. That is how I interpret the memorandum. (A. G. B.)

Page 294.

With a sort of Telephone provided with high-resistance coils with which we had at tempted, but unsuccessfully to transmit speech over a line of two or three hundred miles. (A. G. B.)

Page 306.

I think the most interesting thing would be a fac simili reproduction of the Advertiser or Globe with the two verses of conversation printed side by side. (M. G. B.)

Page 312.

I think he did subsequently dread heart disease. He was the first Commissioner of Agriculture subsequently to this. (M. G. B.)

Page 316.

Mr. Isawa. (A. G. B.)

Page 335.

These were Baron Kaueka; and Mr. Komorra. Japanese minister to United States and Peace Commissioner to settle matters with Russia. My Japanese pupil was Mr. Isawa. (A. G. B.)

Page 338.

Yes— I knew that some interference with my patent had been declared through some misunderstanding — but this interference had been withdrawn before I reached Washington, and I could not find anything out about it, as a caveat was a confidential document. I shrewdly suspected Gray, for we were working on parallel lines in developing musical telegraphy I presumed this was the same old thing and we did not know at the time that the transmission of the human voice was concerned. I feared it and asked for information none from Mr. Pollob or Mr. Hubbard, who put me off with the statement that the interference was a mistake and had officially been declared off — the interfering caveat was a confidential document etc. Patent office also refused information on same ground I had been deceived once before by letter from Blake that Gray had transmitted vocal sounds but Blake corrected his statement and said it did not refer to vocal sounds but only to musical sounds. While I feared Gray might have struck 13 289 vocal sounds in his caveat — I knew nothing of the contents of the document until Gray himself referred to the matter in his letter asking permission to exhibit my apparatus. (A. G. B.)